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THE ATTITUDE OF EUROPE TOWARD THE MONROE DOCTRINE

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I have been asked to explain the attitude of Europe toward the Monroe Doctrine, but that would be an easier task did Europe know what the Monroe Doctrine is. That is where you have us of Europe at a disadvantage. We have to take the Monroe Doctrine largely on faith not unmixed with doubt, hoping for the best and always fearing the worst.

So far as England is concerned, she craves no additional territory. I know there is a well established belief among Americans that England never refuses to pick up any unconsidered trifle in the form of an island or a continent that may be lying around loose, and that her diplomacy is always directed with the view of putting another patch of red upon the map. That might have been true in the past, but it is not true today. What she wants is peace and to be allowed to develop her empire commercially. To buy American cotton, turn it into cotton goods and sell them to America is more profitable than adding a few thousand square miles of jungle to the area of the British Empire. Modern statesmanship is "dollar diplomacy," and although that is a discredited term in the ears of some people, it is the true diplomacy of the twentieth century. The lust for land no longer exists. Wars of aggression or to satisfy dynastic ambitions belong to the past. The real diplomat of today is the hustler who carries a case of samples and speaks the universal language of "thirty days, less two off for cash," terms incomprehensible no doubt to many of us here, but which are as well understood by the guileless trader of the Middle Kingdom as by the merchant of Bombay, the Manchester manufacturer and the Pittsburgh foundryman.

When British manufacturers sell goods or bankers lend their money or contractors build railways or docks or investors develop mines and plantations in a foreign country, they do not care about its politics. They want to feel sure that their contracts will be

observed, that life and property are secure, that the foreigner will have justice done him. In the past, in various parts of the world, the British trader was encouraged by his government to seek new markets and extend the commerce of Britain, and he went forth as a commercial pioneer, taking risks and meeting hardships, but knowing that he could rely on his government for protection. His reliance was not misplaced. In some of the darker corners of the globe we had to administer justice in summary fashion. There is much virtue in a six-inch shell if properly aimed. We went up and down the world teaching civilization with ships and armies, and making the commerce of the world safe and open to all nations.

In the last few years there has grown up what I venture to think is a decidedly immoral doctrine, and it is in the territory particularly under the protection of the United States that this doctrine, I regret to say, is most flagrantly exploited. Europeans are encouraged to furnish Latin America with the capital and enterprise needed for its development, but when contracts are repudiated or property destroyed by revolution, courts make a mock of the law and simply register the decree of a dictator, men are badly treated and at times killed; punishment, we are told, may not be inflicted, because the foreigner went there on his own volition and knew the risks he was taking. In theory these countries are supposed to be civilized and are to be treated with the respect and consideration one free and independent sovereign state has the right to expect of another. So far has this theory been carried that the Pan-American Congress, in the City of Mexico in 1901, declared that:

"America, as well as Europe, is inhabited today by free and independent nations whose sovereign existence has the right to the same respect, and whose internal public law does not admit of intervention of any sort on the part of foreign peoples whosoever they may be."

Here is a platitude wrapped up in high sounding words, as most platitudes are, stating a truism with all the solemnity of a vital discovery, and enunciating a declaration impossible of acceptance. Nations similar to individuals are entitled to receive precisely that respect which they give. A nation that administers exact justice, that treats foreigner and citizen impartially and respects its obligations, similar to a man who is considerate of his neighbors and keeps his word, is entitled to and is accorded respect. To try to write into the Code of Nations a declaration so contrary to morality and so

subversive of an advanced civilization—that the law of any state may not be questioned by “foreign peoples”—is a declaration opposed to public policy. It is much as if the promoters of get-rich-quick enterprises should meet in conference and declare that the post office department has no right to question their operations. It is only the lawless that have no respect for the law.

Rhetoric may conceal truth, but cannot create it. To put all the nations on the same plane, to bracket them together as entitled to the same respect, is an absurdity. The half barbarous nations of the Balkans are lower in the scale of civilization than England or France or Germany. The civilization of Central America has not yet been brought to the high standard of North America. This somewhat blunt way of stating facts may offend the sensibilities of the peoples of the Balkans, as it may those of the states of Central America, but they have the remedy in their own hands. If they want to be treated with the same consideration as the great nations, they only have to show the same veneration for law and the same observance of a constitutional form of government. Nor is it true, as they so often assert, that the smaller states of Central America have to submit to being bullied because they are small and defenseless. Switzerland, Denmark, and the Netherlands, could be packed away in Nicaragua with room still left for several thousand persons to move about without being crowded. Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway and Sweden could be stowed away in Venezuela with a margin still left to allow expansion. Yet while Venezuela and Nicaragua constantly furnish work for the diplomats and continually threaten their neighbors' peace, the little nations of Europe that I have just mentioned cause no uneasiness. The banker feels as secure when he lends them money as he does in dealing with the United States or any of the great European powers. In the sisterhood of nations, it is not size but character that counts.

To speak quite frankly, the Monroe Doctrine is not popular in Europe, and that unpopularity comes not from what the Monroe Doctrine is, but rather from what it is not. We have no objection to the United States taking such precautions as may seem necessary to safeguard itself. England has done the same thing and has a Monroe Doctrine in the Persian Gulf. Japan found it necessary to go to war to protect herself from the menace of attack through Korea. The right of a nation to take adequate means for its protection

will not be denied. But those rights involve corresponding obligations. It is as dishonest for a nation to seek to obtain undue advantages and render no service to humanity as it is for an individual to grow rich by preying upon the credulity or avarice of his neighbors.

Some thirty years ago a conference was held in Berlin, of which the United States was a member, to discuss spheres of influence. It was agreed that a power claiming a sphere of influence must make its jurisdiction effective; in other words, in return for the advantages conferred by dominating or controlling territory it must assume certain obligations, and one of the most important of these is the protection of foreign subjects and their property.

The territory embraced by the Monroe Doctrine is the American sphere of influence, and I think Europe has a right to expect that the United States will not shirk its obligations. The United States cannot play fast and loose with its compacts. It cannot in honor say that Europe shall not take the territory of Latin America in satisfaction for debt or as punishment for the murder of its subjects, and yet at the same time refuse on its own account to take measures to compel defaulting states to pay their just debts or make reparation for their crimes.

The United States by its policy of "hands off" to Europe, and its refusal to accept responsibility for orderly government must be held—and I say it with regret—largely to blame for the revolution, disorder, and insecurity that have so disgraced Latin America. If there was no Monroe Doctrine, Latin America would have a wholesome respect for British and German battleships. Latin America now laughs at Europe and sneers at the United States and wallows deeper in the pit of anarchy. That, as I see it, is the great result of the Monroe Doctrine. Let me add that I use the term "Latin America" generically, and while some of the states of Latin America are faithful in the observance of their obligations and considerate in their treatment of foreigners in Latin America, as elsewhere, the just have to suffer for the crimes of the unjust.

I have said that Europe does not know what the Monroe Doctrine is or means, and I doubt very much if any one in America is better informed. All that we know is that the mere suggestion of any European power taking measures to protect itself in Latin America immediately arouses the active dislike and even open hostility of the United States. Some Americans, however, who have generously

attempted to interpret the Monroe Doctrine for the benefit of benighted Europe have said that there is nothing to prevent us from seeking reparation provided we do not occupy territory. I presume those persons have a profound belief in the efficacy of absent treatment. It recalls the old nursery rhyme of the daughter who asked her mother for permission to bathe, which the mother granted to her darling on condition that she would not go into the water. If we are not permitted to occupy territory, how can we exert pressure? If we cannot seize a custom house until a fine is paid, what redress have we?

Not long ago in a discussion of the Monroe Doctrine, an eminent American asserted that "the Monroe Doctrine does not stand in the way of a just war between any South American state and European state." What constitutes a just war the speaker did not define, but we may be sure the stronger power would always maintain the justice of its cause and the weaker would proclaim to high heaven its infamy; but after the war was over there would be at least this consolation, the question could be referred to The Hague for determination. It will be remembered that a few years ago Great Britain, Germany and Italy, feeling they had just complaint against Venezuela, established a pacific blockade of one of its ports, much to the delight of the natives, who never having seen such a gallant spectacle believed it was arranged solely for their amusement, and enjoyed it hugely. But not so Washington, where there was much perturbation among the guardians of the Monroe Doctrine and much searching, if not of hearts at least of precedents, to discover whether profane hands had not been laid upon the palladium of Latin-American debt repudiation. It was admitted by your President and his advisers that a pacific blockade was permissible, but it was also intimated to the powers concerned that the sooner they found it convenient to order their ships away the better it would please the United States. A pacific blockade, however, not producing any tangible results in the way of cash, and the Monroe Doctrine prohibiting the allies from seizing and occupying territory, which the Venezuelans knew, a few shells were thrown into the port to remind its people that the ships had not been sent there to make a Latin-American holiday. When the news reached Washington of the firing of those shells there was much excitement. What would have happened had the powers really struck a blow instead of being content to show their teeth, I

do not venture to say, but I can easily imagine that a somewhat awkward situation might have been created. If any European power should seriously go about to make war, just or otherwise, on one of the states of Latin America, I do not think it would be long before the United States would ask explanations. It is not necessary to call attention to the message sent to Congress by President Cleveland that brought the United States and Great Britain almost to the verge of war.

What Europe thinks of the Monroe Doctrine cannot be told until Europe knows what Americans think of it. After careful investigation I reach the conclusion that as three schools of Monroeists exist in the United States the foreigner is apt to become somewhat confused in his attempt to reduce the Monroe Doctrine to terms. To the first school belong the men who believe it is for the best interests of their country that the Monroe Doctrine should purposely be left vague, so that, as Secretary Hay once unofficially and somewhat jocularly defined it to me; "The Monroe Doctrine is anything that the American people choose to make of it of any particular time to fit any particular emergency." President Wilson has recently been reported in the newspapers as saying, "There is much discussion, but no doubt, as to what the Monroe Doctrine means." And Mr. Taft, with equal brevity and no less lucidity, wrote not long ago, "Any question dependent upon or involving the maintenance of the traditional attitude of the United States concerning American questions commonly described as the Monroe Doctrine." Clearly then from this school we shall receive no precise definition.

To the second school belong the men who fear there is something in the words "Monroe Doctrine" to offend the sensibilities of Latin Americans, and therefore they would abandon the name while retaining the principle. They tell us that Latin America does not desire to be under the protection of the United States as enforced through the Monroe Doctrine, and that, instead of solidifying the relations between the United States and Latin America, the Monroe Doctrine creates friction. But while the colonization of Latin America by Europe is not to be permitted and the European powers are not to be allowed to take means to secure redress in case of wrong doing, there is to be no obligation imposed upon the United States to act for Europe when the necessity demands it.

To the third school belong those men who display a curious

timidity about a great nation executing its own mandate. The Monroe Doctrine they tell us is good, but when anything is to be done under its operation, the United States must ask for the assistance of some of the Latin-American powers.

Many well meaning but I fear short-sighted persons have urged with great persistence and more or less vehemence the wisdom of the United States incorporating the Monroe Doctrine into a joint stock concern and inviting some of the states of Latin America to acquire proprietary rights therein, tinctured, I presume, by the prevailing belief that a monopoly is vicious, but by some magic arrangement a bad trust may be made good, and if there are Latin-American stockholders the curse will be taken off the Monroe Doctrine. It is not for a foreigner to instruct Americans, but whatever affects the United States is a matter of vital concern to an Englishman, and I cannot refrain from pointing out the grave danger you will run if the Monroe Doctrine is transformed from a purely North American polity to a Pan-American policy.

In the first place, it is contrary to the teaching and experience of history, and history is valueless unless we make the past a guide to the present. History shows that an alliance between nations of different blood and different speech and different traditions, whose concepts of justice and society are not the same, whose civilization is not the same, has never endured and eventually is certain to involve the contracting powers in grave complications. And where shall this alliance end? Certain Latin-American states are now mentioned as eligible to admission in this partnership. How long, do you think, it will be before other states will claim the same right, insisting upon it as evidence of their high cultural development and if refused will naturally be bitterly resentful, as it would be public advertisement that they are inferior and not worthy to rank with states of the first order? Instead of a Pan-American doctrine bringing peace and order to Latin America and satisfying Europe it would throw another discordant element into that political cauldron and change the whole status so far as Europe is concerned.

If the United States is anxious to invite Europe to challenge the Monroe Doctrine it cannot adopt an easier course than to admit Latin America into partnership, for I think it must be evident to every one that while Europe will accept a doctrine maintained by the United States it will properly enough resent the dictation of Latin

America. I do not say that Europe considers itself "better" than Latin America or regards Latin America as inferior, as I dislike very much the assumption of national superiority or the calm condescension of foreigners. We need not go deep into reasons, for certain things are so well understood that explanations are unnecessary. An Englishman will go into an American court of law and have no fear that his nationality will prejudice him. An American feels secure in the impartiality of British justice. An Englishman in America has no dread that his property will be seized because his sympathies were with one political party or he hoped for the success of a rival political leader. An American may live in England, and without risk to his person or fortune hold in contempt monarchical institutions. When the same stability and the same liberty of thought and action exist in the states of Latin America as in the United States and Great Britain it will then be time enough to consider the wisdom of making the states of Latin America the mandatory of this continent.

A further objection is that an alliance of the kind suggested is unworthy of a nation so great and powerful as the United States; it is a confession of weakness that the United States ought not to make. If the United States is not strong enough and courageous enough—and no one doubts either its strength or its courage—to uphold and enforce the Monroe Doctrine it ought to abandon it and not ask assistance to infuse it with vitality.

If the United States is to regard the Monroe Doctrine simply as a means to obtain special privileges and hamper the legitimate expansion of Europe in Latin America, Europe will always resist it and be irritated and it will be the cause of continuing friction, but if, while safeguarding the interests of the United States, it is also to be a means of keeping the peace and inducing Latin America to observe its obligations it will have the cordial support of the great powers of Europe. It would promote the harmony of international relations were the United States either frankly to declare what the Monroe Doctrine is, so that all nations might no longer remain in doubt, or with equal frankness impress upon the states of Latin America that they cannot hope to escape the penalty of wrong doing by shielding behind the nebulous uncertainty of the Monroe Doctrine.